



Date of Council Meeting: August 10, 2015

**TOWN OF LEESBURG
TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION**

Subject: H-2 Guidelines and the H-2/East Market Street Area Plan Projects

Staff Contact: Susan Berry Hill, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning

Council Action Requested: Council requested a work session discussion on the status and timeline of the H-2 Guidelines project and the H-2/East Market Street Area Plan project.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends that work on the H-2/East Market Street Area Plan be completed before starting work on the H-2 Guidelines project.

Commission Recommendation: None at this time.

Fiscal Impact: None at this time.

Work Plan Impact:

Staff resources necessary for these projects will include a Project Manager and assistance from the Preservation Planner, Planning Assistant, and the Director. Staff estimates that the H-2 Guidelines project (number 1 above) could be accomplished in approximately 5-6 months, and that staff would work with the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) on this project. The length of the project would depend on the degree of change proposed for the Guidelines. However, it is possible that recommendations could focus solely on elimination of the north King Street and West Market segments from the H-2 Corridor. If so, the project could take less time.

The H-2/East Market Street Area Plan project (number 2 above) is estimated to take 12 months to complete. Both of these projects are in the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) work plan and staff has anticipated starting one of the projects upon completion of two current projects: the Floodplain ordinance revision and the Zoning Ordinance amendment for Mobile Hope project. Staff notes that land development caseload levels, and shifts in future work initiative priorities as directed by Council will affect the DPZ workload.

Executive Summary: In 2008, the Town Council directed that a committee be formed to make recommendations on the H-2 Design Guidelines. After consideration of issues and options, the H-2 Committee made recommendations to the Town Council in June, 2009. Follow-up work on the Committee's recommendations was not started at that time because work was also underway to develop a form-based code for the Crescent District.

In addition, the Planning Commission and staff began work on a multi-year project to update the Town Plan.

As a follow up to the 2012 Town Plan Update, the Planning Commission reviewed the Town Plan Action Program and made recommendations to the Town Council that the H-2 Guidelines update be included in the short list of priority work items. In September, 2013, the Town Council accepted the Planning Commission's recommendation regarding inclusion of the H-2 Guidelines update in the Town Plan Action Plan priority list. Council also suggested that the H-2 Guideline update be combined with work on the East Market Street Small Area Plan. Council directed that these recommendations be included in Department work plans. These items included: Review criteria for development of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), update to the Floodplain Ordinance, H-2 Guidelines and H-2/East Market Small Area Plan, development of regulation to promote Low Impact Development principles. Since that direction was given, staff has completed the CIP criteria and has partially completed the Floodplain Ordinance. To date, staff has been unable to start the subject project due to heavy land development application caseload and other Council-directed work priorities.

Background:

H-2 Committee: The Committee's recommendations are briefly summarized as follows:

1. Location and depth of H-2 corridors. The location and depth of the H-2 District should be maintained with some modifications.
2. Regulations. To achieve and maintain an effective H-2 Corridor Program, The Town should use both guidelines *and* regulations (Zoning Ordinance, DCSM) to achieve design objectives.
3. Revisions to Guidelines. The H-2 Guidelines should be revised to clearly state the vision for the corridor; better reflect the character for each of the four corridor areas; address best practices of good site design as well as building design; and address streetscaping.
4. Review Process. The Committee recommended that administrative reviews for applications in the H-2 district be used as much as possible. Also, for legislative applications (rezonings and special exceptions), referrals should be provided from the BAR for inclusion in the review process regarding general compliance with H-2 guidelines with respect to 'big picture' design issues like size, scale and massing. Architectural details would then be handled through the normal H-2 review process through an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to be reviewed by the BAR following approval of the rezoning or special exception. *(Note: Following the H-2 Committee's recommendations, procedural process improvements were implemented to better integrate the Planning Commission, Town Council and Board of Architecture reviews of legislative land development projects that are situated within the H-2 corridor. These process improvements*

have yielded a more coordinated review process for applicants, BAR, Planning Commission and Council alike.)

H-2 Guidelines Update - Project Description: The H-2 Guidelines currently apply to north and South King Street, West Market Street, and East Market Street outside of the Bypass. Note that the East Market Street area inside the Bypass is now in the Crescent Design District (CDD) and subject to those regulations, not the H-2 Guidelines. This project will review the Guidelines per the H-2 Committee recommendations and consider options for either updating the Guidelines or replacing them.

Staff notes that very few H-2 applications are processed in the North King Street and West Market Street segments of the H-2 overlay district since the guidelines do not apply to the largely residential properties in this area. The most notable application recently processed in these areas was St. John's Catholic Church on North King Street. Aside from that application, there have been no other applications in these sections of the H-2 Corridor. While a work effort to update the H-2 Guidelines has been directed by Council, and the H-2 Committee recommended retention of these sections, it would appear that the need for Design Guidelines in these areas is not pressing and consideration could be given to eliminating these areas from the H-2 Corridor.

H-2/East Market Street Area Plan – Project Description: The purpose of this planning effort is to develop *more specific, and more integrated approach to land use, transportation and design* for the area that exists east of the Bypass extending to the corporate limits. This is an important geographic gateway to the Town. A large undeveloped portion of the corridor is situated north of East Market Street between the Outlet Mall and Battlefield Parkway. The Town will have an opportunity through this H-2/East Market planning process to work with property owners, Town residents, the Planning Commission, Board of Architectural Review, Economic Development Commission, as well as Town Council to shape future development in an effort to align land use, transportation, and design objectives for this gateway into the Town.

Planning objectives for this project will include:

- *Land use* - The Town Plan land use for this portion of the corridor designates a significant portion for Regional Office. During the Town Plan update in 2012, there was general agreement that this designation should be expanded to consider other land use scenarios including mixed use development. In addition, recent changes to the Zoning Ordinance have recognized that current development trends 'blur' the line between production activities and office land uses. For example the use of 3-D printing has changed how we look at "production" activities such that they *should* be considered for office zoning as well as traditional industrial zoning. The Town Plan land use policies for the East Market corridor should be updated to reflect the Town's desire to expand "employment uses" to be more in line with current thinking on "production" uses and trends in mixed use.

- *Transportation* – The Battlefield Parkway/Market Street interchange has recently been funded for design by the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA). As this design effort begins, the Town should look at the Cardinal Park/East Market Street intersection in more detail. Additionally, this planning effort will comprehensively review inter-parcel access and the planned road network for all properties in the corridor to assure that access is provided in the near term and in the future when East Market Street becomes a limited-access facility. This planning effort will also investigate opportunities to increase multi-modal mobility options in the corridor.
- *Design* - The H-2 Committee recommended that an approach be used that is a combination of guidelines and regulation to achieve the best design outcomes for all areas of the H-2 corridor. This planning process will develop specific corridor design objectives and consider if/how to revise the H-2 guidelines and if/how to develop zoning regulations to further implement the guidelines.